

NATIONAL CAVE AND KARST RESEARCH INSTITUTE

MONTHLY UPDATE FOR AUGUST 2003

PROGRESS MADE BY THE INSTITUTE STAFF AND PARTNERS THIS MONTH:

- As an Institute partner, New Mexico Tech began the formal search for the Chief Scientist position at the Institute. The search announcement may be viewed at: <http://www.nmt.edu/mainpage/job/12aug03.html> The Park Service decided to hire this position as a one-year, renewable contract position through New Mexico Tech for maximum flexibility during this year's establishment phase. While the Institute is committed to continuing a head scientist position in the future, the exact responsibilities and whether the position would remain as a contracted worker or become a federal employee have not been determined.
- Penny Boston (PB), Louise Hose (LH), and Dave Shaver (NPS-GRD) attended the **National Speleological Society (NSS) National Convention** in Porterville, CA, along with 1000 other cavers, cave/karst scientists, educators, and conservationists. They discussed the Institute with many of the participants and presented about a half-dozen formal presentations on behalf of the Institute. LH also served as a convention staff member and led a pre-convention geology field trip. The NSS continues to express interest in loaning part of its library collection to the Institute. Discussions in their public administrative meetings suggested that previous concerns within their membership regarding the loan seem to have dissipated thanks to better communication with the members.
- Scientists and cavers provided assistance in the field (southern Mexico) to the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) on behalf of the Institute. LH, PB, Ken Ingham (NSS), Lynn Kleina (NSS), Kathy Lavoie (SUNY-Plattsburg), Dave Lester (NSS), Diana Northup (Univ. of NM), and Doug Soroka (USDA) worked in the field and from their offices to help the NHK team develop the story line and shoot footage to demonstrate scientific concepts. NHK is paying salary and all expenses for the Institute-provided assistance on this project.
- Bill Jones of the Karst Waters Institute reports that their cave protection and management book, which is partially sponsored by the Institute, went to the printer in late August. They anticipate having copies ready for 2 important karst meetings in October.
- LH provided an interview to *Super Science*, a science magazine for middle school age children.
- Roger Scott (RS) re-joined the Institute staff in mid-August but spent most of the month on a temporary assignment helping Glacier NP during their fire crisis.
- RS and LH prepared a draft of an extensive background paper on the Institute and the issues it currently faces in preparation for a scoping session planned for early October. Staff at the NPS's Geologic Resources Division (Dave Shaver, Ron Kerbo, & Ed Kassman) and our primary partners (New Mexico Tech and City of Carlsbad) are currently reviewing the document.
- New Mexico Tech and the National Park Service invited representatives from cave/karst programs across the country to attend the Institute's vision building (scoping) workshop to be held on October 5th and 6th in Shepherdstown, WV. The list of invitees represents 8 federal programs, 2 state programs, 1 local government, 5 non-profit organizations, and 6 academic programs.
- The Institute has been receiving and reviewing written responses sent in reply to our request last month for input on the future of the Institute. These responses will be incorporated into the previously mentioned background paper.

- Lewis Land (LL) met with Mike Calvani, Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce, to discuss declining water levels in the Capitan Reef, a karstic limestone aquifer that is the municipal water supply for the town of Carlsbad, and their relation to the decrease in spring discharge into the Pecos River.
- LL participated in resistivity surveys over Ft. Stanton Cave, Lincoln Co., NM, with John McLean, Cave Research Foundation, and Barbara Luke, University of Nevada - Las Vegas. LL and LH provided assistance to the BLM by participating in the exploration and mapping of >1500 m of cave passage in Snowy River, a new passage recently discovered in Fort Stanton Cave.
- At the request of the BLM, PB provided expert advice on health-related issues related to possible blood-borne pathogens resulting from a recent injured visitor in Fort Stanton Cave, New Mexico.
- LH completed editing another issue of the refereed *Journal of Cave and Karst Sciences*.
- The National Park Service and New Mexico Tech are working on a Cooperative Agreement between these two primary partners in the Institute.
- Kassman, Shaver, and other NPS staff in Denver have worked with LH to draft a General Agreement with the City of Carlsbad and other NPS documents to allow the pass-through of federal funds to support the City's effort to build the Institute's headquarters. The City and New Mexico Tech are currently reviewing the draft General Agreement.

PLANS: Anticipated activities for the near future include:

- In a continuing effort seeking broad input and investment towards development of the Institute, NCKRI plans a facilitator-run, 2-day meeting of a small (15-20) but diverse group of cave/karst program representatives on October 5th & 6th in Shepherdstown, WV, to discuss the Institute's operational & administrative vision. LEAD Alliance will provide a professional facilitator for the meeting. LH, Shaver, Kassman, PB, and other representatives of the Institute's three primary partners plan to attend.
- Sending the background paper on the Institute to scoping session invitees and making it available to any interested party in mid-September.
- NMT will interview and hire a Chief Scientist, to be based in Carlsbad and work directly with the Institute, this fall.
- LH will attend the Karst Waters Institute's Epikarst Conference in Shepherdstown, WV, in early October, and the National Cave and Karst Management Symposium in Gainesville, FL, in mid-October.

NCKRI STAFF:

LH – Louise Hose, NPS

RS – Roger Scott, NPS

LL – Lewis Land, New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources

PB – Penelope Boston, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology